

**U.S. Department of Justice**

Civil Rights Division  
Office of Special Counsel  
for Immigration-Related  
Unfair Employment Practices



**You Have The Right To Work.  
Don't Let Anyone Take It Away.**



## Real Life Stories That *Can* Help You

The United *States can* be a land of opportunity. Unfortunately, it can also be a very frustrating place. As you go about looking for work, you may meet employers who *do not understand* the laws. Whether they *do* it purposely or not, they discriminate. They may not hire you because they think you are not authorized to work or because of your nationality, *appearance, and accent*.

This booklet will tell the stories of two *people*. These *individuals applied for jobs and were turned away*. Each had the right to work in the *United States* but was *discriminated against* by employers who *demand documents that they had no right to ask for*.

But most *importantly*, these people stood up for *themselves*. They knew they had a right to work in the *United States and* they talked to the *people* who could help them. You can too.

Read their stories. If you have been *discriminated against* in this way, *take action*. *Follow the hotline instructions in this booklet*. *The law is on your side*. But before it *can do anything to help*, you must ask for help.

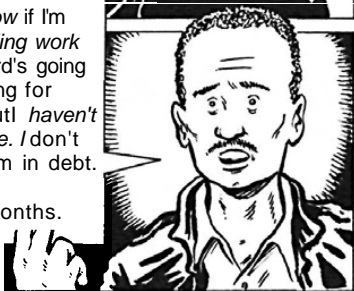
What's wrong Felipe?  
Why the long face?

Sure! What's  
going on?

*Sorry to bother you,  
Julia, but I'm having  
problems finding work,  
and since I know  
that you have experience  
in these things. I wanted  
to talk to you.*



You see. I *donn't know* if I'm  
having bad luck *finding work*  
or if something weird's going  
*on*. I've been applying for  
work everywhere, but I *haven't*  
*been hired anywhere*. I don't  
know what to do. I'm in debt.  
I *haven't* paid my  
rent in two months.



Calm down, Felipe! Tell me exactly what happened. Why *didn't anybody hire you?*

I *don't know*. They wouldn't even tell me. I think it's because I don't have a green card. I have a *temporary work permit*.



OFFICE

PERSONNEL

Hotel S

That doesn't  
*matter*. You're  
*authorized to work*.  
Why didn't they  
accept your papers?



Well, I don't know. At my  
last job interview at a hotel,  
the head of personnel took  
me aside and said he was  
very sorry but they couldn't  
hire people whose papers  
weren't 'in order.'



But you have a work permit, *and* your papers are in order.



That's right. I wanted to tell him the same thing, but my English isn't very *good*. I couldn't explain about my papers very well. Besides, the man didn't even want to listen to me.



Oh, Julia! I don't know what I'm going to *do*!

Don't worry Felipe, everything will be okay.  
But you can't give up. *Remember when they fired me and Matilde from the plant because we weren't citizens and we didn't speak English?*

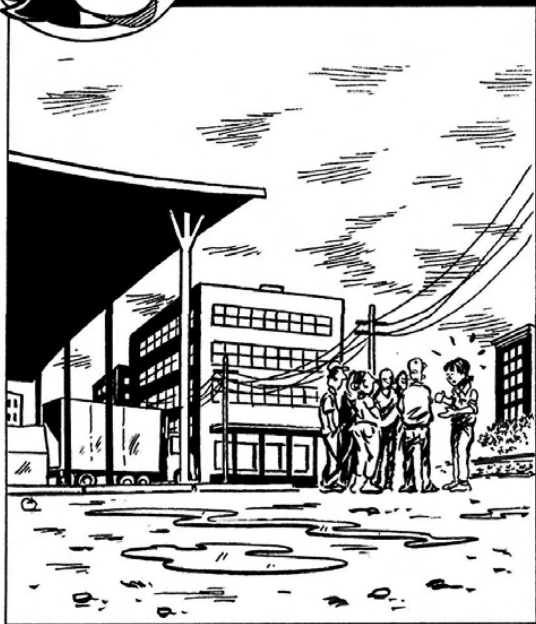
Yeah, but that was *different*.

No! It was almost the same thing!



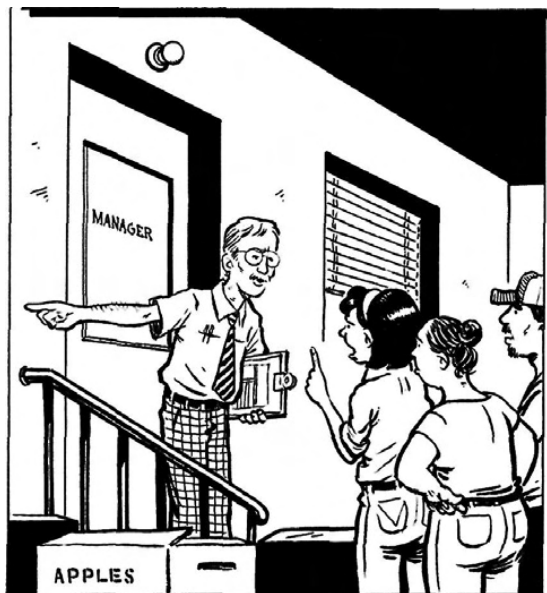
*Remember, we worked at that plant.*

*What English did we need to  
pack apples'? That's why  
Matilde and I decided to  
organize a group of  
co-workers to talk to  
the bosses.*





We demanded to speak with the manager. His assistant finally had to listen to us. The *manager* told us to stop fighting, that if we *continued* making trouble he'd fire us. He said *we should* be grateful to have work even though we weren't citizens.





Some of my co-workers were afraid of losing their jobs. That's why they didn't want to go *on* pushing. Matilde *and I* were the only ones who *defended* our right to work. I knew *we'd win the case* because Claudia, a social worker at my children's school, told me about an office in Washington, D.C. The office helps people like us who *are authorized to work* but are discriminated against. And they help for free.

*I decided not to be scared or embarrassed so I called. I spoke to a lawyer from the Department of Justice who actually spoke Spanish. That same day the lawyer began to help us.*



The lawyer called the bosses at the plant and told them that it's against the law to fire or turn away workers because they're not U.S. citizens. He also explained to them that it's illegal to deny work to qualified people who have work permits, or who speak English with an *accent*.



*So the plant had to give me and Matilde our jobs back. And we got paid for the time we were unemployed after we were fired.*



But afterward, didn't your bosses give you a hard time?

No. they couldn't. They knew we had lawyers who would help us.



Julia, can you give me the *number* for that office at the Department of Justice?



Of course! Felipe! When you call, ask them to *connect* you with *someone* who speaks Spanish. The number is 1-600-255-7666. Here's the phone. The call is free!

Julia, I called the  
number you gave me and  
spoke with a lawyer in Spanish.

She agreed that my papers were in order  
and called the hotel where I had been  
turned down. She told them that they had  
to give me the job. She explained to them  
that the green card was only *one of several  
documents that prove work authorization  
and identity and that to deny someone a  
job who is authorized to work may be  
discrimination.*



Once they *understood* that the papers I had shown them initially were valid, they agreed to give me the job. I *started* last week.

That's wonderful! See how everything *worked out*? The only way to *end job discrimination* is by *standing up* for our rights.



Yes, you were *right*. If it *hadn't been* for your *advice* and the *telephone* number to get help from the Office of Special Counsel in Washington, I'd still be without a job. I really appreciate your help, Julia. I learned how to defend my rights.



If You Have Also Been Discriminated  
Against Because Of Your National  
Origin Or Your Immigration Status, Call  
THIS Hotline Number For Help:



1-800-255-7608

*TOD for hearing impaired:*

1-800-237-2515

In the Washington, D.C. area,  
call (202) 616-5594

*TDD for hearing impaired:*

(202) 616-5525

Civil Rights Division  
Office of Special Counsel for  
Immigration-Related Unfair  
Employment Practices (OSC)

or write to OSC at:

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Special Counsel  
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20530